

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN  
GRAY 241

no name of any kind. A decent-looking man, sir,  
but rough-  
like. A sort of sailor, we think."

Dorian started to his feet. A terrible hope  
fluttered past  
him. He clutched at it madly. "Where is the  
body?" he  
exclaimed. "Quick! I must see it at once."

"It is in an empty stable in the Home Farm,  
sir. The folk  
don't like to have that sort of thing in their  
houses. They say  
a corpse brings bad luck."

"The Home Farm! Go there at once and  
meet me. Tell  
one of the grooms to bring my horse round. **No**,  
Never mind.  
I'll go to the stables myself. It will save time."

In less than a quarter of an hour Dorian Gray  
was galloping  
down the long avenue as hard as he could go. The  
trees seemed  
to sweep past him in spectral procession, and  
wild shadows to  
fling themselves across his path. Once the mare  
swerved at a  
white gate-post and nearly threw him. He  
lashed her across  
the neck with his crop. She cleft the dusky air  
like an arrow.  
The stones flew from her hoofs.

At last he reached the Home Farm. Two men  
were loitering  
in the yard. He leapt from the saddle and threw  
the reins to  
one of them. In the farthest stable a light was  
glimmering.

Something seemed to tell him that the body was  
there, and he  
hurried to the door, and put his hand upon the  
latch.

There he paused for a moment, feeling that he  
was on the  
brink of a discovery that would either make or  
mar his life.  
Then he thrust the door open, and entered.

On a heap of sacking in the far corner was  
lying the dead  
body of a man dressed in a coarse shirt and a  
pair of blue  
trousers. A spotted handkerchief had been  
placed over the  
face. A coarse candle, stuck in a bottle,  
sputtered beside it.

Dorian Gray shuddered. He felt that his could  
not be the  
hand to take the handkerchief away, and called  
out to one of  
the farm-servants to come to him.

"Take that thing off the face. I wish to see it,"  
he said,  
clutching at the doorpost for support.

When the farm-servant had done so, he  
stepped forward.  
A cry of joy broke from his lips. The man who  
had been shot  
in the thicket was James Vane.

He stood there for some minutes looking at the  
dead body.  
As he rode home, his eyes were full of tears, for  
he knew he  
was safe.